

In the Claims

Please cancel withdrawn claims 2-4, 10, 18-34 and 36-42.

Claim 1. (Previously presented) A method for producing a compound of the formula:



wherein R is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group and ring A is an imidazole ring which is optionally substituted further, or a salt thereof, which method comprises reacting a compound of the formula:



wherein ring A is as defined above, or a salt thereof, and a compound of the formula:



wherein M^1 is an alkali metal atom or a group of the formula: $-Mg-Y^1$ where Y^1 is a halogen atom, and R is as defined above, or a salt thereof, and bringing the resulting product into contact with an acid.

Claims 2-4 (Cancelled)

Claim 5 (Previously presented) The production method described in claim (1), wherein the ring A of the compounds of the formulas (I) and (III)-is an imidazole ring wherein the 1- or 3-position is optionally protected.

Claim 6 (Previously presented) The production method described

in claim (1), wherein R is an optionally substituted lower alkyl group, an optionally substituted lower alkenyl group, an optionally substituted cycloalkyl group, an optionally substituted phenyl group or an optionally substituted pyridyl group.

Claim 7 (Previously presented) The production method described in claim (1), wherein R is a lower alkenyl group, a cycloalkyl group, a phenyl group, a pyridyl group, or a lower alkyl group optionally substituted by a halogen atom.

Claim 8 (Previously presented) The production method described in claim (1), wherein R is a C₁₋₆ alkyl group.

Claim 9 (Previously presented) The production method described in claim (1), wherein R is an isopropyl group.

Claim 10 (Cancelled)

Claim 11 (Previously presented) The production method described in claim (1), wherein the reaction product of a compound of the formula (I) or a salt thereof and a compound of the formula (II) or a salt thereof is brought into contact with a sulfuric acid.

Claim 12 (Previously presented) The production method described in claim (1), wherein not less than 3 equivalents of the compound of the formula (II) or a salt thereof is used per one equivalent of the compound of the formula (I) or a salt thereof.

Claim 13 (Previously presented) The production method described in claim (1), wherein the compound of the formula (I) or a salt

thereof and the compound of the formula (II) or a salt thereof are reacted in tetrahydrofuran.

Claim 14 (Previously presented) The production method described in claim (1), wherein the compound of the formula (I) or a salt thereof and the compound of the formula (II) or a salt thereof are reacted in not less than 50 equivalents of a solvent relative to one equivalent of the compound of the formula (I) or a salt thereof.

Claims 15 and 16 (Cancelled)

Claim 17 (Original) 1-(1H-Imidazol-4-yl)-2-methyl-1-propanone or a salt thereof.

Claims 18-34 (Cancelled)

Claim 35 (Previously presented) The production method described in claim (1) wherein R is a lower alkenyl group, a cycloalkyl group, a phenyl group, a pyridyl group, or a lower alkyl group optionally substituted by a halogen atom.

Claims 36-42 (Cancelled)